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NEWS

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By Dennis Sale
UM Information Services

UM TO HAVE
GRIZZLY MASCOT

MISSOULA---

A year or so from now there'll be at least one grizzly bear in Montana you'll be able to get close to--and maybe even pet--without running the risk of being bitten or clawed.

And the bear will look as real as any live grizzly roaming the forests of the northwestern United States.

This one "harmless" grizzly will be the campus mascot at the University of Montana. He'll be made of bronze.

Sculptor for the massive *Ursus horribilis* (just plain grizzly to us) is Rudy Autio, UM associate professor of art. He's now putting the finishing touches on a half-size clay model of the bronze grizzly. The finished bronze statue will be erected in the Baby Oval near the Lodge on the University campus, Autio hopes sometime next year, though the project may take longer.

Autio, who has been a member of the University faculty 11 years, would be first to admit that the grizzly bear project "has been frustrating" at times, but he is no less determined to complete the job, which he began a year ago at the suggestion of UM President Robert T. Pantzer.

Autio estimates the completed bronze UM Grizzly will stand seven feet high and weigh about 5,000 pounds. The bear will rest on a concrete block several feet high, which will add to the mammoth size of the creature.

"A bronze bear like this normally would cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000," Autio estimates. But the bronze for the statue has been donated by the Northern Pacific Railway Co. and the Pacific Hide & Fur Co., Missoula, and Autio is doing the sculpturing in his spare time, thus minimizing overall expenditures for the project.

more

If some of the 6,000 pounds of bronze isn't needed to make the bear, the surplus metal will be used to make statues for the New University Center, which is slated for completion next fall on the UM campus.

Autio soon will be working on what he calls the "pointing-it-up" phase of the smaller clay grizzly likeness, in which various segments of the half-size clay grizzly are measured and doubled in size so the final, larger clay model can be prepared.

Among the difficulties incurred in a project of this nature, Autio indicated, are the many steps necessary to complete the statue.

From the larger clay model, Autio must make what he calls "a negative mold" of the bear from plaster, then paint wax on the negative mold. A liquid plaster-silica compound is poured into and over the wax bear likeness and the wax is then melted away in an oven, leaving an empty space between the plaster-silica core and outer plaster-silica shell.

Hot, liquid bronze is then poured into the empty space, the metal solidifies and the plaster material may be chipped and broken away from the bronze form. "As much of the plaster core as possible also is scraped away to reduce the weight of the statue," Autio said.

Preparations for making the half-size clay grizzly were quite extensive.

"I visited zoos, studied photos and relied heavily on paintings of grizzlies by the late Charles M. Russell of Great Falls to determine what kind of grizzly we wanted for the University campus," Autio said.

He said he has learned that there is "no universal kind of bear." Each bear Autio has seen has had its own facial expression and other unique characteristics.

Autio holds a bachelor's degree in art from Montana State University, Bozeman, and a master's degree in sculpturing from Washington State University, Pullman. He studied ceramics at the Archie Bray Foundation, Helena, from 1952-57 before joining the UM faculty in Missoula.

Autio said he and several of his assistants are going to attempt to pour the bronze for the bear at the University Foundry on the Missoula campus. If that isn't feasible the Western Iron Works, Butte, or the Modern Art Foundry in New York may handle this phase of the UM project.